

THE DISCOVERY OF THE RARE ANT, *STENAMMA WESTWOODI* WESTWOOD, IN CO. WICKLOW.

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In a collection of ants kindly made for me by my friend Desmond J. Doyle at Knockandarragh, Donard, Co. Wicklow, were two workers of the species *Stenamma westwoodi*. These ants, taken in a sandy bank at a height of 600 feet, on 9th September, 1944, are of particular interest for two reasons. Firstly they bridge the gap between the station at Old Portmarnock, Co. Dublin, where on 23rd May, 1927, E. O'Mahony took a dealated female floating on the Sluice River.⁽⁵⁾ Hitherto this, the most northerly record for Ireland, has been separated by a gap of more than 50 miles from the nearest station: the gap has now been reduced to less than half that distance. Secondly the two specimens found by Mr. Doyle occurred in a nest of *Formica fusca*. This would appear to be the first occasion on which *Stenamma* has been found in association with another ant in Ireland. Mr. Doyle searched for the ant again in 1945 but owing to the removal of the bank was unable to refind it.

A. W. Stelfox who⁽⁵⁾ says that this ant is "widespread but exceedingly local and rare in Southern Ireland" has given⁽⁴⁾ a very interesting account of a visit to a number of colonies in Mount Garret Wood, the first locality in these islands where the nests of this species had been found, by R. A. Phillips on 21st May, 1921.⁽²⁾ In all these cases as well as those in Killoughrim Forest (also in Co. Wexford) the colonies were independent, thus supporting Fr. E. Wasmann's statement that the species is one not myrmecophilous.⁽⁹⁾ Many authors however regard it as an inquiline, e.g. von Hagens,⁽⁸⁾ D. F. Smith.⁽³⁾ It certainly frequently has been found in association with other ants. The only other definite association with *Formica fusca* mentioned by H. Donisthorpe⁽¹⁾ is F. Smith's record from Plymouth, July, 1857, although R. A. Phillips records (*loc. cit.*) a male and a worker on the ground close to a *fusca* nest in a wood at Camolin, Co. Wexford, September, 1921. While the habits of *Stenamma* are obscure the number of times it has been taken in association with other species suggests strongly that it is at least a facultative myrmecophile.

According to H. Donisthorpe (*loc. cit.*) the swarming takes place in September and October and he gives von Hagen's record⁽⁷⁾ of a swarm on 15th October, 1864, at Eberfeld. While there are no swarming records from Ireland, Phillips and Stelfox took males in nests on 17th September, 1921, at Mount Garret Wood.

This interesting little ant has so far only been recorded from the following vice counties: South Kerry, Kilkenny, Wexford, Wicklow, North Tipperary, Carlow and Dublin. The worker may easily be distinguished from our other "red ants" by its small size, pin-point eyes and long narrow petiole and I would be glad to hear from anyone who may come across it.

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 - (5) — "A List of the Hymenoptera Aculeata (Senu lato) of Ireland." *Proc. R. Irish Acad.*, 1927, 37.B, p. 337.
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